



PRESS RELEASE

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New Cashmere Processing Facility Will Create Jobs in Hirat

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | JUNE 28, 2011 — USAID Deputy Mission Director Brooke A. Isham attended a ceremony today at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry where Minister Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi signed a leasing agreement with Cashmere Fibers International, from the United Kingdom, and Traitex, from Belgium, to renovate and revitalize the Hirat Textiles Park and establish a cashmere processing facility in Hirat Province. The USAID-supported facility will create 44 jobs directly and support the creation of more than 10,000 indirect jobs.

Speaking at the ceremony, USAID Deputy Mission Director Isham emphasized the importance of the Afghan cashmere industry and the continuing need to develop this valuable resource. “The Afghan government, the international donor community, and private sector partners from around the globe must seize the opportunities that exist in Afghanistan to drive job creation, economic growth, and regional stabilization. The cashmere processing plant represents the good that can come out of the partnership between the United States, Afghanistan, and the international community,” said Isham.

Currently, Afghanistan exports almost all of its cashmere in its raw form, as no significant processing of cashmere takes place within the country. As a result, most of the value of Afghan cashmere is captured outside of Afghanistan, reducing the price offered and demand for cashmere harvesting by Afghan farmers.

“By facilitating the opening of this first modern cashmere processing facility in Afghanistan, the Government of Afghanistan will create a significant number of new skilled jobs while enhancing the country’s reputation as a cashmere-producing country. In addition, the project will result in the renovation and revitalization of the Hirat Textiles Park, which will help create a natural fibers industrial cluster and generate revenue for the Afghan government,” said Minister Ahadi.

The new cashmere processing facility has been made possible through a global development alliance, a public-private partnerships that allows USAID to leverage its own resources against private-sector investment. Partners include domestically-owned, private businesses and multinational corporations, nongovernmental organizations, business and trade associations, universities, donor agencies, philanthropic leaders, venture capitalists, and think tanks.

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